Hoover Accuses Akron Paper of Kent 'Distortion'

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AKRON, Aug. 7—FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover has charged the Akron Beacon Journal "distorted" the facts in an article published July 23 that reported the FBI "concluded" the shooting of four Kent State University students by Ohio National Guardsmen last spring was "not necessary and not in order."

In a letter to John S. Knight, president and editor of the Beacon Journal, Hoover wrote:

"The results of our inquiry into the Kent State matter were furnished to the United States Department of Justice without recommendation or conclusion. Contrary to the misinformation contained in your newspaper, we have made no accustions nor expressed any opinions concerning prosecutive action to officials of the federal government or the state of Ohio."

Hoover wrote that he had received scores of letters from "knowledgeable and concerned citizens" wanting to know whether the FBI had gone beyond its normal investigative role in the Kent case.

He advised Knight that he had replied to public inquiries by calling the article "absolutely and unequivocably" false.

In a reply to Hoover's letter, Knight said he regretted the paper had used the word "conclude" instead of "report" but maintained the story was otherwise accurate.

"I regret this mistake," Knight wrote to Hoover. "But an exercise in semantics must not be permitted to obscure the fact that our article was essentailly correct and not 'distorted,' as you allege.

"It is interesting that you have not contested the pertinent information contained in our story, but only the notation that the FBI made a 'conslusion' about the tragedy at Kent.

"Furthermore, I am surprised at the hostile tone of your letter which is evidently intended to modify public opinion.

"There is no occasion to lecture the editor for, as you know, we are quite as dedicated to the quest for truth as the FBI."